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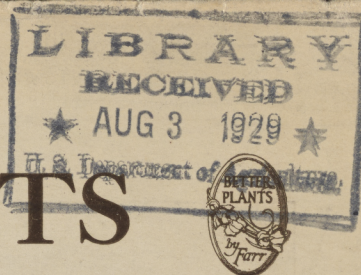
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BETTER PLANTS

God's first gift to man was a Beautiful Garden



VOLUME III

JULY-AUGUST, 1925

NUMBER 4



An Iris Garden at Peabody, Kansas
Six-year-old plants of *Iris pallida dalmatica* at Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Garden of Mrs. James M. Cox, Ashland, Va.
Iris time at Chevy Chase, Md. Garden of Mrs. A. A. Hoehling

After Six Years with Iris

By the Editor of BETTER PLANTS

May 21, 1925. Seven years ago, on this date, I was straining my eyes for a sight of German periscopes. Today, treating the same eyes to the unfolding of *Iris Germanica*.

Seven years ago, a male typically indifferent to flower beauty, and one of those individuals who "just got by" with his botany in school. Three years ago, the conceiver and ever since then the editor of BETTER PLANTS.

At this point, I am tempted to make the usual and conventional apologies, but, on serious thought, I do not believe that BETTER PLANTS needs apologies. So many letters of appreciation have been received from its readers that there can be no doubt about its merits and appeal.

After six years of association with Mr. Farr and his iris, I see myself more and more as a plant ignoramus. Each day brings me a fuller appreciation of the plant knowledge yet to be acquired. I often wish that man's normal span of life were three times the proverbial three score and ten, for then we might preach plant knowledge definitely, finally and comprehensively.

Having been indifferent to plants in my earlier years, I cannot pretend to know much about iris after only six years of

interest. Yet, I could quite easily entertain or bore a novice for an entire day on the subject, if the novice were inclined to listen. And, if I knew my subject more thoroughly, there would be no end to the discourse, for in iris one finds more distinct species and classes, more myth and real history, more contrast of color and structure, and more enthusiastic and interesting people, than in any other commonly known flower. I do not wonder that Mr. Farr has said, "If you yield to the magic spell of the iris, it will lead you across the border into a wonderland of delight. . . you will be led on and on until, like Peter Pan, you become oblivious to the passing of time."

My iris knowledge would not be of much interest to iris experts, but I do believe it will interest 90 per cent of BETTER PLANT readers; and, after all, that percentage of interest is all that any amateur editor may hope for.

Impressions and Opinions

Perhaps the best method of conveying what I have learned about iris is to record the impressions and opinions being experienced during this, my sixth iris time.

I may add that, since January, several iris lecture trips, and this week, a visit to several iris gardens besides the Farr collection, have brought me into more intimate contact with "the other side of the fence." In fact, have removed whatever "fence" that existed. I can see iris from the viewpoint of the gardener as well as that of the grower. I can appreciate the disappointment of receiving true or inferior plants and the anxiety to obtain only good varieties.

My first iris for 1925 was Sir Trevor Lawrence, an *Oncocyclus* hybrid which bloomed in our greenhouse during early March. You may know that this species of iris is native to Palestine and Asia Minor, and that they are the "aristocrats of the genus." Anyone who will give them the special care required will be richly rewarded. Frames or a greenhouse are desirable equipment, and, if you would possess an iris that outrivals orchids, I can vouch for the species. They are not delicate in growing habit, but their habit of making a late fall growth constitutes the chief difficulty in obtaining good bloom. The new growth is caught by freezing weather and next season's bloom is destroyed. When grown outdoors they should be lifted in September and stored



Japanese Iris at Wyomissing

until December in the same fashion as Holland bulbs, so as to prevent the fall growth referred to. Some of the best obtainable varieties of this species are Sir Trevor Lawrence, Hamadan, Giran, Nazarin, Parsam and Parvar.

April was an uneventful iris month until near its end when the first iris pumila (dwarf iris) began their pretty little show. Remembering Elliot's apt correlation of crocuses and fluffy chicks, I could visualize a coming brood of White Leghorns in Schneekuppe, Black Minorcas in Atrovioleacea, and Rhode Island Reds in Aurea maculata. Again the dwarf iris demonstrated that they help materially to extend the iris blooming season, and that they can be put to a dozen uses in the hardy garden.

Iris in Early May

On May 12, our iris expert, Mr. Clouser, who has handled the Farr collection since 1910, filled vases and milk bottles with the first blooms of Ingeborg, The Bride, Walhalla, Blue Boy, Helge and Rose Unique. Next day, I tore away from my desk and its usual May accumulation, for just a flying trip through the first crop of Intermediate (early May flowering) iris. Today I could allow myself the afternoon to iris and found the Intermediates at their best. Without reference to notes or records, I write my impressions, tonight.

The best whites are Florentina, Ingeborg and Albicans, in order named. Rose Unique again lives up to its reputation as the best pink intermediate. Walhalla, Major, Carthusian and Blue Boy dominate the blue section; Empress and Etta the yellow; Purple King and Kochii are about the most purple things I have seen in any kind of iris or other flowers. I notice little difference between them; no one needs both but one is necessary.

The Intermediates are desirable because they fill in the iris blooming season for two weeks. Three times during the last six years they have been the only cut-

flowers for Memorial Day. It also strikes me that the Intermediates are inclined to be of more pure and uniform color shades than the tall bearded sorts, while in height they average about 6 inches less.

May 22, 1925. I spent all of this afternoon among the iris. This morning, two stenographers were providentially available and I could leave my desk with a clear conscience. The Intermediate iris were still more in their glory. The large masses of white, pink, lavender, blue and purple, in thousand lots of each color, caused me to think that with iris one can bring the changing moods and colors of the sky down to earth. In few other flowers is the foliage so submerged and the bloom color so predominant. Thus, for mass planting, one is assured of the color effects desired.

In my notes of yesterday I did not refer to the Tall Bearded varieties which are already in bloom. First among these were Iris King, Nibelungen, Albert Victor, MaMie, Queen of May, Cecile Minturn, Seminole, Ring Dove, Alcazar, Ute Chief, and some of the coming Farr seedlings.

From this small group I have formed a few impressions. Iris King is close to Nibelungen, excepting that the falls have more red in them. Alcazar and Ute Chief are, to all practical purposes, and even by very careful comparison, the same variety. We are not justified in continuing to list Ute Chief, and if anyone has formerly purchased this variety I shall be glad to have their account credited accordingly towards any other variety they may desire. Ring Dove has the longest stems of the group mentioned. Seminole is, as usual, one of the most distinct sorts. I have not seen anything thus far to compare with it. MaMie is reminiscent of Anna Farr, but not to be compared at all. A few days ago, near Philadelphia, and 50 miles south, I was a guest at a sunken iris garden where Anna Farr and a host of the other good things, which are yet to come at Wyomissing, were in full bloom. This private garden is, I believe, one of the prettiest

and most effective in the country. It is circular in shape with a pool in the center. From the pool, and rising upward in concentric circles, is a series of terraces or landings, each one of which contains from twenty to fifty varieties of iris. All of the groups are staked and named with inconspicuous, but effective, labels. Here are iris with perfect drainage, plenty of sunlight and with the upper third of the bulb above the ground. I think I will have to go another six years before I see a more effective and correct iris planting.

Coming back to Wyomissing, I want to say that only one Cecile Minturn was open today. Seminole was open about 10 per cent; Iris King and Nibelungen about 50 per cent; and MaMie almost at her best.

Cecile Minturn and Queen of May were coming strong. In shades of pink, I would grade as follows: Wyomissing, the lightest pink; Aurora next; then Queen of May; then Mt. Penn; then Cecile Minturn; then Georgia, and lastly Rose Unique. I will want to match them again before I place Her Majesty and Windham which I saw in bloom in Philadelphia last week, but which have not yet opened here.

Tomorrow is Saturday and visitors' day. It will probably be Monday before I can obtain more impressions.

Tuesday, May 26. Saturday, a 90 degree temperature and the hottest May 23 in fourteen years. Sunday and Monday rain, and a fifty degree drop. Slight frosts here; in nearby towns, snowfall. What a test for iris, and particularly for the new sorts whose bloom substance and endurance is being questioned. Our lilac and tree peony bloom have been ruined by previous frosts. In general, the spring of 1925 will not, for us, go on record as a good blooming season.

Practically all of today was spent with our new iris planting at Womelsdorf where 313 varieties of new or highly rated iris were planted in alphabetical arrangement, last fall. About 200 varieties were in bloom today, and more than 100 new and scarce sorts are before me as I dictate.

Conservative Conclusions

I am aptly reminded of the wise old owl who sat in an oak and as he saw more, spoke less and consequently heard more. I have seen many wonderful iris today. My article from here on will be a great deal more cautious and a lot more conservative. If I am sure of one thing, it is this:

No one has a right to be positive or radical about iris until he has seen thousands of varieties in hundreds of different gardens and locations, and for a score of blooming seasons.

For example, if I had not already seen several private iris gardens this season, and noted the ultimate development under ideal conditions of many varieties, and if I had not observed the Farr collection for six years, I would tonight be rashly condemning some struggling one-year-old plants and lauding more fortunate ones.

No one has been more radical about discarding iris, peony and lilac varieties than myself. If Mr. Farr and I were ever prone to differ seriously, it was on discarding, and the changes in recent Farr catalogs have largely been due to my

BETTER PLANTS

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Bertrand H. Farr—
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L. W. NEEDHAM, General Manager
H. G. SEYLER, Treasurer and Editor
C. M. BOARDMAN, L.A., Landscape Dept.

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AFTER SIX YEARS WITH IRIS, continued insistence. After six years, I can begin to appreciate Mr. Farr's reluctance to drop varieties. I can fully appreciate his equally insistent opinion that "they are all beautiful."

And yet discarding must go on if commercial growing is to continue. No grower can afford the overhead of the multitudinous varieties in existence, and no garden needs all of them. To carry all of them means that the grower will turn over only a small percentage of his stock each year, just as a shoe store is unwise in trying to carry a few of all the shoe styles in existence.

While I am positive of the necessity for discarding, I cannot ask for more than what the American Iris Society is already doing. That is, to be very careful and deliberate in obtaining ratings on new iris; and, what is more important, to suggest that all new introductions be observed in a central test planting, under supervision of the American Iris Society, for several years before being offered commercially.

Last year more than 200 new varieties of iris were introduced and offered commercially by various introducers. One reads and bears of new ones every day. They cannot all be distinct or worthwhile. Let us insist that no further iris introductions be offered, or that no gardeners buy them, unless they bear the American Iris Society stamp of approval and merit.

If you agree with me, you can help by joining the American Iris Society, by casting your vote and by expressing your opinions to the officials. At any rate, every iris fan should belong to and believe in the American Iris Society. You will save your dues many times over each year.

Yes, but what have I told you about iris varieties? Nothing, because six years are not enough to warrant authoritative statements. When I read the conservative and scholarly articles of Wister, Sturtevant, Farr, Dykes, Hort, Yeld, Baker, Foster and other real iris experts, I have no desire to run the risk of being the "barking puppy" by contrast. Join the American Iris Society and read what these men have to say. Their opinions are unbiased and uninfluenced.

Attend iris shows. Visit iris gardens. Study detailed and conservative descriptions. Buy lower priced varieties first.

This, of what I have learned in six years, is all I feel justified in expressing for the July-August issue of BETTER PLANTS. More impressions and opinions are to come. Some day, there may be a need for the iris knowledge I cannot help but acquire and then I will do my best.

N. B. To join the American Iris Society, send \$3 with your application to R. S. Sturtevant, Wellesley Farms, Mass. Please mention Farr's when doing so.

IRIS NOTES TAKEN BY H. G. SEYLER ON MAY 27, 1925

Bear in mind that these notes were taken from six-month-old plants. I hope to assemble similar notes from the same plants in 1926. The comparison will be interesting.

Do not use these notes as a final reference although they will be helpful in comparing varieties. As the plants grow older the height will increase and the blooming season will change.

KEY

1. Not blooming (weak plants).
2. Closed buds.
3. Bud color showing.
4. One bloom per plant.
5. Full bloom.
6. Fading.
7. Through blooming.

Variety	Bloom Stage	Height in Inches	Variety	Bloom Stage	Height in Inches	Variety	Bloom Stage	Height in Inches
Afterglow	1		Dugueslin	3	22	Medrano	2	18
Albert Victor	4	26	Duke of Bedford	1		Mercedes	2	20
Albicans	4	17	Dusky Maid	6		Merlin	5	26
Alcazar	5	26	Eburna	1		Midas	2	20
Amas	6	20	Ed Michell	3	30	Mildred Presby	2	18
Ambassadeur	2	23	Eglamoore	5		Minerva	6	12
Ambigu	3	18	E. H. Jenkins	3	20	Minnehaha	3	26
Anemopsis	6	12	E. L. Crandall	2	20	Miranda	5	19
Angelo	4	29	Eldorado	4	22	Miss Rowe	2	26
Anna Farr	3	27	Emir	3	20	Miss Willmott	1(weak)	
Anne Bullen	3	21	Empire	2	22	Mithras	2	18
Anne Leslie	2	22	Empress	6	12	Mlle. Schwartz	2	30
Ann Page	4	27	Etta	6	10	Mme. Bouillet	2	18
Antonio	4	27	Fairy	2	30	Mme. Chereau	2	30
Apache	4	22	Faith	2	14	Mme. Cheri	3	30
Aragon	2	18	Fantasy	2	22	Mme. de Sevigne	4	26
Archeveque	4	18	Flavescens	2	14	Mme. Louesse	2	22
Argonaut	3	21	Florentina	6	17	Moliere	1	
Ariadne	1	26	Florida	1		Monsignor	2	14
Arsace	1		Francina	4	28	Montezuma	2	14
Assyrian	5	26	Fritjof	6	20	Morwell	(weak)	
Athene	4	22	Fro	2	18	Mrs. Cowley	3	20
Atrocaculea	1		Georgia	4	26	Mrs. Tinley	4	26
Aurea maculata	1		Geraldine	3	27	Mt. Penn	4	22
Aurea (Species)	2	14	Giran	2	17	Navajo	2	17
Aurora	4	30	Glitter	2	18	Nazarin	1	
Azure	3	26	Gnome	1(w.p.)		Neptune	2	22
Balaruc	2	22	Guam	1		Nibelungen	4	24
Ballerine	3	32	Gules	4	27	Nine Wells	1	
Baronet	3	29	Halfdan	7	14	Nirvana	3	30
Belladonna	5	22	Halo	4	26	Nothung	2	17
Benbow	1		Hamadan	4	18	Nuec d'Orage	2	18
Black Prince	1		Harriet Presby	3	38	Ochracca Caerulea	2	17
Blanche	5	19	Herald	4	26	Odin	7	14
Blue Bird	5	26	Her Majesty	2	20	Olivia	1	
Blue Bird (dwarf)	1		Hermoine	1		Onnoris	2	14
Blue Boy	6	14	Hercules	4	22	Opera	2	20
Blue Jay	2	14	Hiawatha	2	17	Oporto	4	22
Blue Lagoon	2	19	Hippolyta	3	62	Orange Queen	1	
Bluestone (dwarf)	1		Inca	2	20	Oriental	2	22
Brandywine	1		Ingeborg	7	12	Oriflamme	4	23
Bruno	2(w.p.)	14	Innocenza	1(weak)	18	Paladin	1	
B. Y. Morrison	3	26	Iris King	2	20	Pallida dalmatica	2	26
Camelot	2	28	Isis	5	32	Pallida dalmatica	3	30
Canopus	5	27	Isoline	1(weak)		Pallida foliis argentea		
Caporal	6	22	Ivanhoe	4	23	var.	2	17
Caprice	3	22	Ivorine	1		Paracina	1	
Carthusian	6	17	Jacquesiana	2	18	Parc De Neuilly	3	27
Catalosa	4	27	James Boyd	2	20	Parisiana	4	22
Caterina	3	24	Japanesque	2	20	Parsam	1	
Catleya	4	27	John Foster	7	12	Paulina	4	22
Cecile Minturn	3	22	Josephine	1		Pauline	2	22
Charmant	7		Juniata	2	24	Paxatawny	2	18
Cjengialti	3	14	Junonia	1		Perfection	4	22
Cjengialti Loppio	2	14	Kashmir White	2	14	Petit Vitry	3	22
Cinerea	1		King Christian	1		Phyllis Bliss	2	20
Citronella	2	28	King George V.	6	14	Pocahontas	2(weak)	20
Clematis	3	22	Knysna	2(weak)	12	Powhatan	4	26
Cluny	4	36	Kochii	6	14	Princess Vic. Louise	4	20
Col. Candelot	3	24	Kurdistan	6	10	Prince Victor	7	9
Comanche	4	20	Lady Byng	3	26	Prosper Laugier	3	20
Commodore	4	28	Lady Foster	6	22	Prospero	2	20
Conestoga	5	30	Lady Shelford	4	26	Pumila caerulea	1	
Cora	2	24	Lance	5	22	Pumila compacta	1	
Corrida	2	20	Lancelot	3	27	Schneekuppe	1	
Cretonne	2	20	La Neige	2	14	Quaker Lady	3	20
Crimson King	6	17	Lavengro	2	17	Queen Alexandra	3	20
Crusader	3	30	Leander	2	20	Queen Caterina	3	30
Cyanea	1		Lent A. Williamson	5	26	Queen of May	4	26
Dalila	2	15	Leon Trenance	4	26	Rachel Fox	2	20
Dalmarius	3	22	Lohengrin	3	18	Raffet	2	20
Daphne	2	20	Lord of June	(weak)		Red Cloud	3	17
Dawn	4	22	Loreley	3	18	Red Riding Hood	3	22
Dejazet	5	20	Lurida	7	11	Regan	1	
Delicatissima	2	22	Lurline	5	27	Rhein Nixe	2	20
Diadem	3	26	Lutescens statellae	1		Ring Dove	2	32
Dilkash	6	18	Lynette	3	22	Robin	2	20
Dimity	2	26	Mady Carriere	4	28	Rodney	3	26
Dolores	3	20	Magnifica	4	32	Romany	2	14
Dolphin	6	14	Major	6	18	Rosalba	3	20
Dominion	2	22	MaMie	4	26	Rosalind	2	24
Dorak	1		Mandaliscae	5	32	Roseway	3	26
Dora Longdon	4	26	Marsh Marigold	2	22	Rose Unique	4	20
Dorman	4	30	Mary Garden	2	14	Rotorua	3	28
Dorothea	6	14	Mary Orth	2	22	Royal	7	12
Drake	4	30	Mary Williamson	2	18	Ruby	3	22
Dream	2	27	Massasoit	2	22			

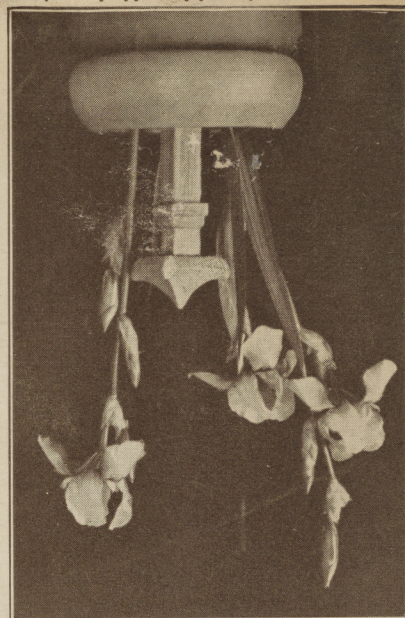
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BETTER PLANTS—July-August, 1925
Iris Edition



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BETTER PLANTS

IRIS NOTES BY H. G. SEYLER, continued

Variety	Bloom Stage	Height in Inches	Variety	Bloom Stage	Height in Inches	Variety	Bloom Stage	Height in Inches
Samite	2	14	Speed	1		Trojana magnifica	3	28
Sarah	3	18	Speedwell	1		Trosuperba	1	
Sarpedon	4	20	Stamboul	3	22	Tunisie	2	22
Semele	1		Stanley H. White	2	18	Turco	2	26
Seminole	4	22	Sudan	2	14	Tuscany	1	
Shalimar	4	22	Sunshine	2	12	Undine	2	17
Shekinah	2	24	Susan Bliss	1		Ute Chief	4	26
Sherbert	2	26	Swatara	3	22	Valery Mayet	3	20
Sherwin Wright	3	17	Sweet Lavender	2	20	Viking	3	26
Shiraz	1		Syphax	4	17	Violacea grandiflora	3	24
Shrewsbury	3	17	Tangiers	2	14	Walhallia	6	17
Silvermist	3	22	Tartarin	3	20	White Knight	2	12
Simplicity	2(weak)		Tectorum	1		Windham	2	18
Sindjkhat	2	30	Thelma Perry	2	20	Wyomissing	4	20
Sir Hugh Evans	1		Titan	2	22	Yellow Hammer	1	
Sir Trevor Lawrence	4	20	Tom Tit	3	22	Yvonne Pelletier	2	32
Souv. De La Grange	4	22	Trianon	3	18	Zua	4	10
Souv. De Mme. Gaudichau	1		Tristam	2	12-14	Zwanenburg	7	
			Trojana	2	17			

To Landscape Architects. July is iris planting time. Begin some of the fall jobs now by planting iris. Give the client something which will cause least trouble, will produce a wide range of color, and by careful selection a three months blooming period. Something which will be sure to bloom next spring, and for which your client will inwardly or openly thank you. If the Farr catalog is wearing out or mislaid, send for another. No obligation.

Bertrand H. Farr
Wyomissing Nurseries Company
1250 Garfield Avenue
WYOMISSING, PENNA.

IRIS ON TRIAL

(Try Them, Then Buy Them If You Like Them)

Do you hesitate to buy new varieties of iris because you would first like to see them in bloom? Here is an opportunity to see the new iris in your own garden before you finally buy them. Read the offer and you are of the disposition that goes half way, you will find us waiting for you. other half.

1. The offer applies on iris only. Please do not ask us to include other varieties. Minimum order \$5.

2. The terms are simple. Send a 50 per cent deposit with a minimum \$5 order; or, if you have an account with us, pay 50 per cent within 30 days after you receive the plants. Then give the plants a reasonable amount of care and attention until next May. (a) If you like the varieties when they bloom, send us the other 50 per cent. (b) If you do not like some of them, keep the plants for the 50 per cent originally deposited and we will charge off the balance. You have learned to know them at half price, and we will know which varieties are popular or unpopular.

This offer expires August 1, 1925. Your order must be postmarked prior to August 2 and must amount to at least \$5.

Aragon	\$3 00	Edouard Michell	\$1 00	Mary Orth	\$3 00
Assyrian	3 00	E. H. Jenkins	3 00	Mildred Presby	5 00
Azure	1 00	Georgia	2 00	Minnchaha	1 00
Baronet	1 00	Giran	2 00	Mt. Penn	1 00
Canopus	10 00	Glitter	1 00	Navajo	1 00
Caporal	2 00	Halo	2 00	Neptune	1 00
Catalosa	5 00	Inca	2 00	Ring Dove	1 00
Cecile Minturn	3 00	Japanesque	1 00	Rodney	1 00
Citronella	15 00	Kashmir White	1 00	Roseway	1 00
Col. Candelot	1 00	Knysna	1 00	Rotorua	3 00
Commodore	3 00	Lady Foster	1 00	Sarpedon	1 00
Crusader	1 00	Lance	10 00	Seagull	1 00
Diadem	1 00	La Neige	1 00	Seminole	1 00
Dimity	2 00	Leon Trenance	3 00	Shalimar	1 00
Dora Longdon	1 00	Lurline	1 00	Stamboul	1 00
Dorman	1 00	Lynette	2 00	White Knight	1 00
Drake	2 00	Mady Carriere	1 00	Yvonne Pelletier	1 00
Dusky Maid	1 00	Marsh Marigold	3 00	Zua	1 00



Iris Sir Trevor Lawrence. A splendid specimen of the Oncocyclis Hybrid type

8/22